

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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## Pakistan

**Post:** Islamabad

### Amendments to Seed Act Pass Senate Ag Committee

**Report Categories:**

Biotechnology - GE Plants and Animals

Trade Policy Monitoring

Planting Seeds

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**Report Highlights:**

The Senate Agriculture Committee passed the amendments to Pakistan's 1976 Seed Act. The full Senate is expected to vote in a few months when it reconvenes. The amendments focus primarily on addressing unregulated participation in the seed industry.

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### **Senate Agriculture Committee Approves Amendments to 1976 Seed Act**

On June 11, 2015, the Senate's agriculture committee approved the amendments to the 1976 Seed Act. The full Senate is expected to vote when it reconvenes again in a few months. These amendments were drafted and proposed a number of years ago and have made considerable progress in the legislature over the nine months. This is one of three key pieces of seed regulation that the Government of Pakistan is reviewing. The others are the Plant Breeder's Rights Act which would establish intellectual property protection and the Biosafety Act which would re-assert the role of the federal government in regulating the biotechnology sector following the devolution of federal powers to the provinces in 2010.

Of the three pending regulations, this says the least about new technology and is primarily focused on eliminating unregulated participation in the seed industry. Key provisions include:

- The amendments would bring the private sector under the purview of the Seed Act. Currently, the Act makes little mention of the private sector, leaving private companies, which have formed under other regulatory statutes (the 1984 companies act for example), largely unregulated.
- Anyone seeking to participate in the seed industry would have to have a seed processing plant or work as a registered seed dealer.
- Selling seed without proper registration and selling misbranded seed would be subject to jail time or a fine.
- Biotech seeds may not contain the "terminator gene," a gene that prohibits the replanting of a crop, but is not deployed in commercial crop crops.
- Biotech seed must have approval from the National Biosafety Committee stating that the seeds will not have an adverse effect on the environment, human, animal, or plant life and health.